

**TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD – PUBLIC HEARING
EXTENDING JURISDICTION OF DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS
JANUARY 14, 2014 6:45 P.M.**

President Slifka: Okay. We will now open the 6:45 Public Hearing at 7:50. This is an Ordinance extending the jurisdiction of the Design Review Advisory Committee. Can I have a roll call, please, Ms. Labrot?

Present were Councilors Chris Barnes, Harry Captain, Judy Casperson, Leon Davidoff, Burke Doar, Denise Hall, Clare Kindall and Scott Slifka. Absent: Shari Cantor. Mr. Gordon sat in for Ms. Cantor.

President Slifka: Okay. Thank you. I suppose we have a presentation from Mr. Alair again?

Mr. Alair: Good evening again. Judging by the blank signup sheet, I am confident that this is going to be a shorter Hearing than your last one. This is the second of three Ordinances before you this evening, an Ordinance extending the jurisdiction of the Design Review Advisory Committee. The, currently, the Design Review Advisory Committee has jurisdiction to review Special Development District applications and only Special Development District applications. In recent years, the members of DRAC have been extremely generous with their time and have graciously agreed to informally, they meet formally but on an informal basis, review other kinds of applications and meet with the applicant. In fact, to their credit, the applicant at Bishop Road, I believe, has met with DRAC on at least one occasion, even though it's not formally within their jurisdiction. We decided at some point that it would be in the best interest of everybody to formalize their authority to review those applications, so that if they make a recommendation, particularly if they make a negative recommendation about a project, someone can't challenge it on the grounds that it wasn't within their purview and that's what this Ordinance does. It allows the Planner, the Planning and Zoning Commission to refer applications to DRAC but it does not allow them, they are subject, TP&Z and Planner, are subject to very strict statutory time limits within which they have to act. It does not allow them to extend beyond those time limits.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Alair. Any questions? Okay. You indicated the signup sheet was blank.

Mr. Alair: It is.

President Slifka: Is there anybody who did not sign up who wished to speak to the subject matter of this Public Hearing? Ms. Pearson. Welcome back.

Robin Pearson: Thank you. Just very quickly. I just want you to know, having a great deal of experience before the Design Review Advisory Committee in West Hartford, what a great job it does. I commend them for wanting to expand their jurisdiction. It's a lot of work and they are all busy professionals. At a time when, for instance, you may or not know that the Town of Canton has, from much input from its business community, recommended and worked hard to

eliminate its Design Review Advisory Board because they feel it is, it gets too much in the way of development in town. I commend this body for the possibility of expanding the jurisdiction of the Design Review Advisory Committee because it works very well and I don't know of any development proposal that has gone before it that has not become better as a result of their insights. They're not pushy, they are, they work very well with applicants, and it's an extremely positive entity that you have here in West Hartford. I hope you make the change.

President Slifka: Thank you. Is there anybody else who wished to speak to this? Okay. I will read in for the record a letter dated January 9, 2014 from the Town Planning and Zoning Commission recommending approval. Referral to DRAC was not necessary. How ironic. [Laughter] And a letter dated January 2, 2014 from Capital Region Council of Governments, finding no apparent conflict with Regional plans and policies or the concerns of neighboring towns. If there's nothing further from my colleagues, we will close the Public Hearing. Okay.

Public Hearing closed at 7:54 p.m.

Essie S. Labrot
Town Clerk/Council Clerk

ESL/dd